

Rooted in Strength  
**WELL-BEING  
WORKBOOK**

AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION  
of CRITICAL-CARE  
NURSES



with  
AACN President  
**Beth Wathen**

**“Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls;  
the most massive characters are seared with scars.”**

**–Kahlil Gibran**

### **A Note From Beth Wathen, AACN President**

When I think about trees, I think about how their scars from lost branches and other damage that they have endured over the years are visible as they grow – they become part of the story of that tree, in the bark on their trunks and branches – the scars become part of their strength and beauty.

Consider the root system of a tree. When the roots are nourished, they become stronger and spread; the tree flourishes, grows and even thrives. When I think about our theme, Rooted in Strength, and AACN’s community of nurses, I think we need to relentlessly ask ourselves – how can we nurture the roots of our community right now, when we need it so much?

This pandemic will leave scars, but if we keep our eye on the important task of nurturing those roots, my hope is that we will find our strength and that strength will allow us to keep going – to emerge – scars and all – stronger on the other side of this challenging time.

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### **How to Use This Workbook**

This workbook can help bring awareness to how we want to carry ourselves forward through this pandemic and beyond. It’s about looking inward in order to understand where we want to focus our attention. It’s about creating intention and taking small steps toward cultivating balance and grace and ultimately giving ourselves the space to thrive again.

The workbook is divided into sections that encourage exploration of yourself, your life as a whole and your purpose as a nurse. It is meant to be used again and again as you seek to recalibrate yourself along your journey to well-being.



# Checking in with **YOURSELF**

It's beneficial to check in with ourselves frequently as a way to stay connected to what our mind and body need. Give yourself a few minutes to really think about how you are feeling in this moment by reflecting on the following questions.

**1.** How am I feeling today?

**2.** What's taking up the most head space for me recently?

**3.** What am I grateful for?

**4.** What have I done for myself lately that made me feel good?

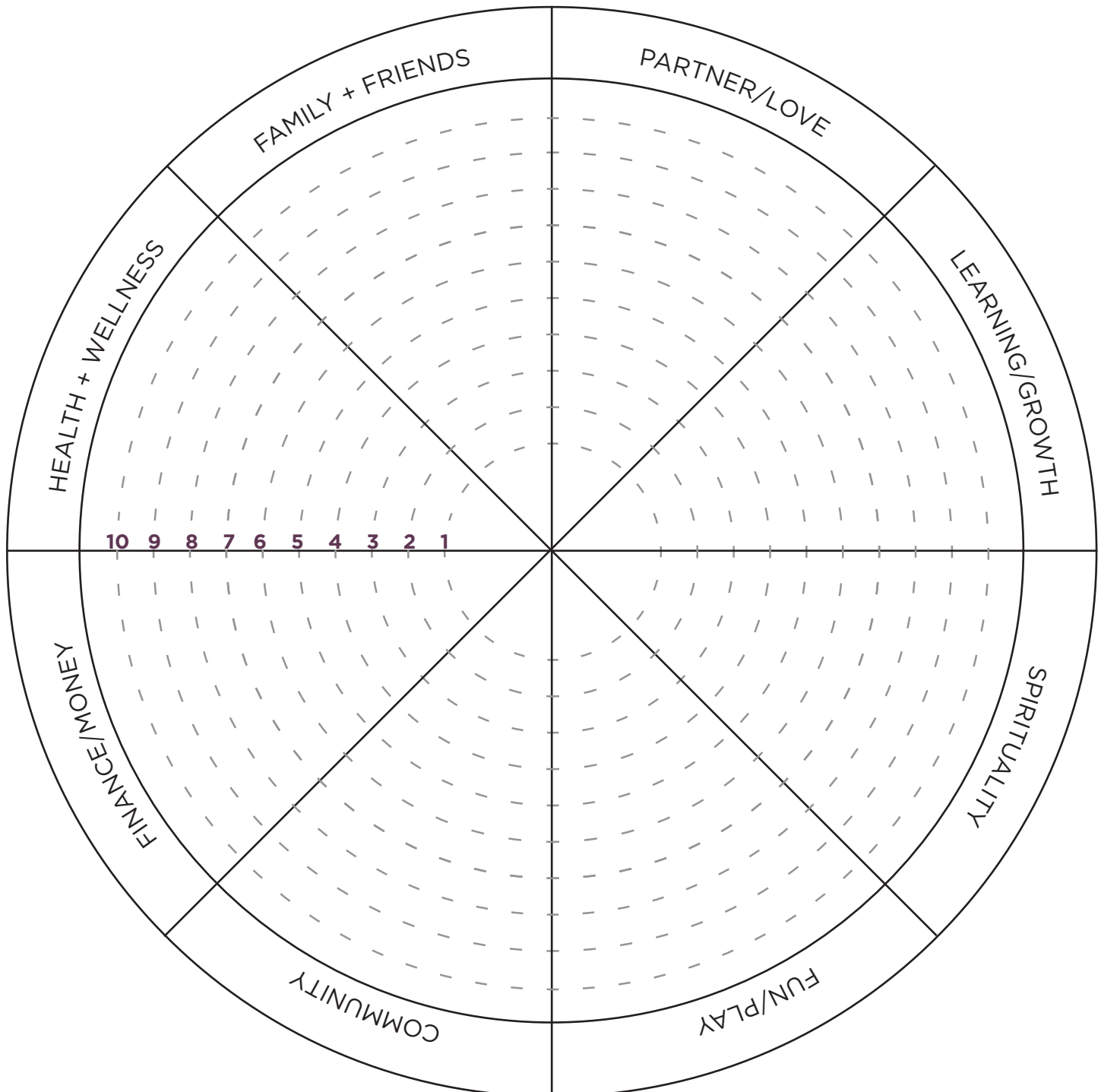
**5.** What helps me manage when I feel stressed and overwhelmed?

**6.** What can I let go of right now to make space for something good?

# Defining your WELL-BEING

Consider your own environment a personal ecosystem, consisting of elements in your life that are important to sustaining your well-being, illustrated in the graph below. The health of these elements is important to sustain your well-being. As with all ecosystems, your personal well-being is built on interrelationships, so if one element is out of balance, the others will ultimately be affected. In the following section, imagine your personal ecosystem and how its ability to function might impact your sense of well-being.

Using the graph below, plot (on a scale of 1-10) how satisfied are you with each element in your ecosystem. As you color the sections in, you'll begin to see which areas of your ecosystem are out of balance.



# Defining your **WELL-BEING**

Reflect on the results of the elements in your ecosystem in the previous exercise. Spend time visualizing what a 10 in each element would look and feel like. Make note of images and thoughts that come to mind.

## **FAMILY + FRIENDS:**

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## **PARTNER/LOVE:**

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## **LEARNING/GROWTH:**

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## **SPIRITUALITY:**

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## **FUN/PLAY:**

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## **COMMUNITY:**

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## **FINANCE/MONEY:**

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## **HEALTH + WELLNESS:**

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# Well-being in the **WORKPLACE**

As illustrated in the previous exercises, the elements in your personal ecosystem are interconnected and if any one element is out of balance, it can impact the health of the other elements as well as your overall well-being.

As a profession, nursing has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses have experienced significant trauma and hardship and continue to face new challenges. It has affected how we work and, ultimately, our ability to thrive as individuals. It is imperative that we both acknowledge the impact of the past and present while considering what we need to carry ourselves into the future.

**Consider your nursing prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. What's different now?**

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**Reflect on things you'd like to focus on and things you'd like to let go of in order to cultivate more personal balance in this new normal.**

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**Which behaviors would support that balance?**

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# Well-being in the **WORKPLACE**

**How can my own insights about well-being from the ecosystem exercise inspire me at my place of work?**

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

As I cultivate a more balanced ecosystem, I might find that the balance allows me to lead with greater influence.

### What impact might that have in my workplace?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Looking  
**FORWARD**

As you attend to your ecosystem, you can be proactive in creating and influencing situations rather than reacting and responding to things after they have already happened. The following questions encourage you to consider how you might use a well-functioning ecosystem to proactively impact your work and play.

**How might I integrate my insights from today into my ecosystem today, tomorrow and the next day?**

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**What is one actionable insight I can commit to integrate into my ecosystem starting now? What actions will I take?**

**How will I check in with myself to stay committed?**

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.





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